

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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1.1 BACKGROUND AND PROCESS

1.1.1 Overview

The City of Denver's Department of Community Planning and Development (CPD) facilitates the Neighborhood Planning Initiative a community-driven effort to develop the vision, plans and priorities for various neighborhoods throughout Denver. Neighborhood plans reflect what residents care most about and inform the prioritization of important neighborhood projects related to land use, mobility and quality of life

1.1.2 Southwest Area Snapshot

The Southwest Area has unique demographic, economic and geographic features.

The Southwest Planning Area consists of five distinct neighborhoods - Athmar Park, Mar Lee, Overland, Ruby Hill and Westwood – and is bounded by Alameda Avenue to the North, Yale and Jewell Avenues to the south, Sheridan Boulevard to the West and the South Platte River and Broadway to the east.

The Southwest Area is home to nearly 52,000 residents of which 67% identify as Hispanic and nearly half are below the age of 30. There is a higher-than-average foreign-born population and households of four or more make up 30% of all households.

The Southwest Area is largely suburban with little remaining developable land. Most properties are one-unit residences and are considered affordable by Denver Standards. The retail and industrial sectors support the area's economy and there is a strong presence of small and cultural businesses representing Denver's diverse populations. All five neighborhoods have major business and shopping areas with strong connections to Federal Boulevard and Morrison Road.

While the area is home to several large regional parks and trails including Ruby Hill Park, Overland Golf Course and the South Platte River Trail, intersecting highways, railroad tracks and the South Platte River act as a barrier and make it difficult to access these features.

Alameda, Mississippi and Evans Avenues provide partial east-west connectivity but are part of Denver's High Injury Network and experience a high rate of crashes annually. Sidewalks are generally substandard or missing and the bicycle network has many gaps

1.1.3 Creating a 20-year vision for your neighborhood

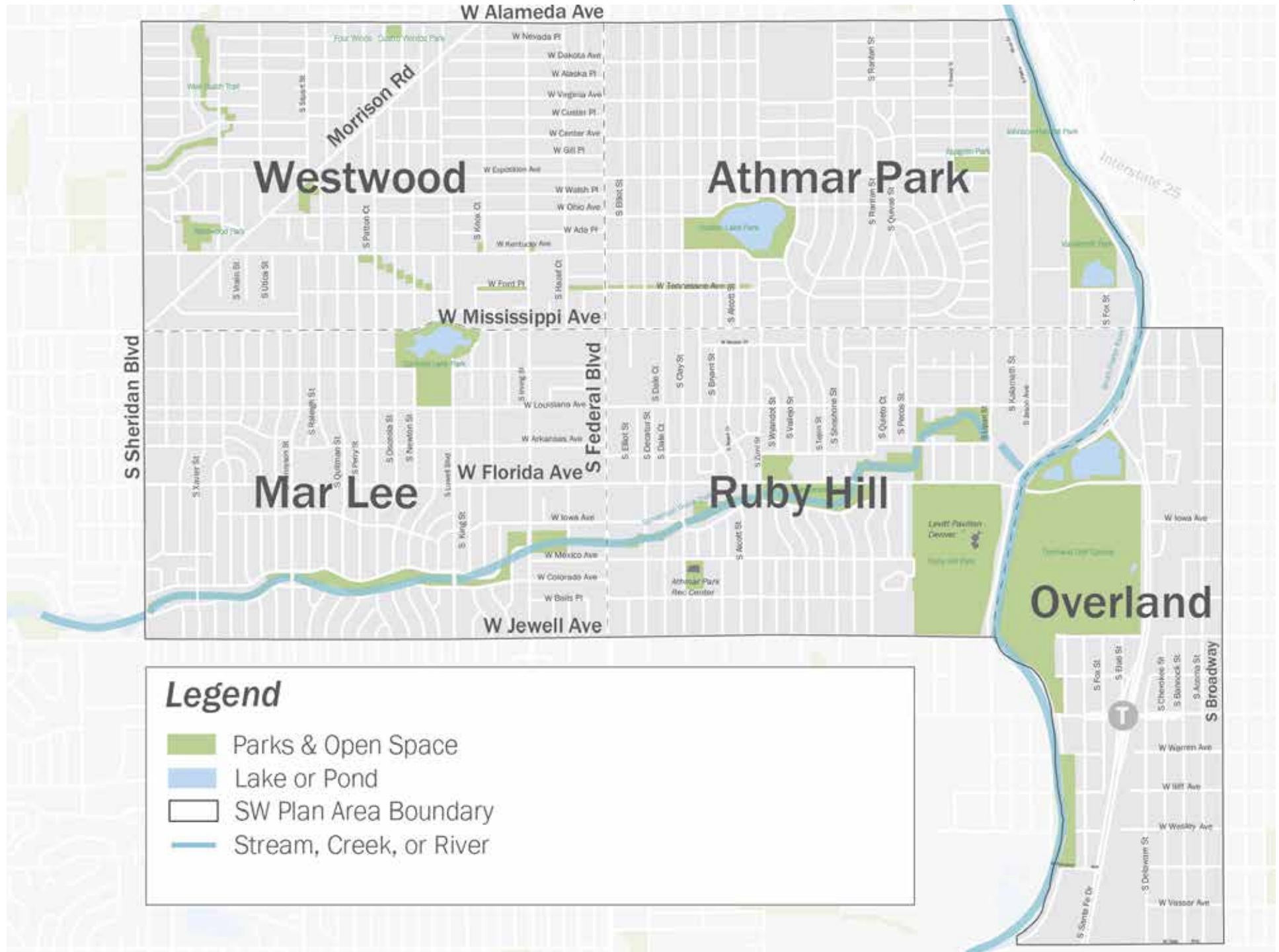
The Southwest Area planning process began in mid 2024. As part of the first round of community engagement in Fall 2024, the team collected input through various events and activities to create this first draft of a 20-year vision plan for Southwest.

Crafted by your community

- 37 touch points to create awareness
- 280 comments from the kick-off survey
- 220 attendees (730 comments) from the kickoff meeting
- 6 workshops with Registered Neighborhood Organizations
- 12 focused engagement opportunities and pop-ups
- 2 touch points with mobile home park communities
- 3 workshops with high school students
- 287 online survey responses
- 492 paper survey responses

To see a summary of input received to create the draft plan, [please click here](#)

The feedback on this first public review draft will be used to update and refine the recommendations, which will be incorporated into a second draft that will be shared with the community this summer. After further updates and refinements, the plan will be taken to the Planning Board and City Council in the fall for adoption.





Workshops with neighborhood groups



Equity Sub Committee Meeting



Over 220 community members in attendance at the Kick-off workshop

1.1.4 Planning for Equity

Equity means giving everyone the chance to succeed, no matter who they are or where they come from. A key goal of Blueprint Denver is to guide change in the city to improve equity for all. To do this, the plan looks at equity through three main ideas:

- Access to Opportunity
- Vulnerability to Displacement
- Diversity of Housing & Jobs

By focusing on these ideas, the plan highlights areas where equity is a concern and helps create recommendations to make Denver more equitable. For the Southwest Area Plan, these three ideas have shaped the strategies and recommendations, especially in areas that need more focus on equity.



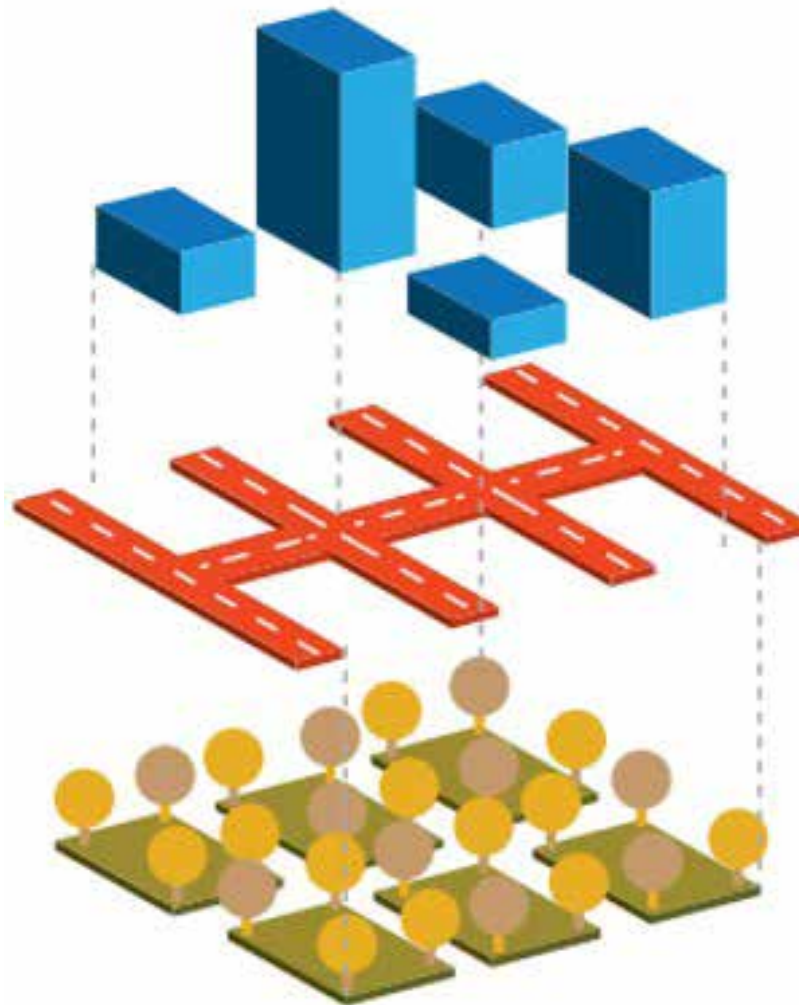
1.2 SOUTHWEST AREA VISION

1.2.1 Guiding Themes and Recommendations Overview

Community input, existing conditions, and citywide guidance informed these six guiding themes that organize the draft plan and capture the Southwest community's priorities.

For each theme, the community identified recommendations to implement the vision. Recommendations relate to land use, mobility and quality of life.

- **Land Use (L):** Considers what is built where and ways to enhance the quality and character of the community through the built environment.
- **Mobility (M):** Considers ways to safely, comfortably and easily connect all people to the places they live, work and play.
- **Quality of Life (Q):** Considers ways to enhance and sustain community well-being through parks, open spaces, natural features and gathering places.





DIVERSE CULTURAL HUBS

In 2045, the Southwest Area will continue to be a diverse cultural hub that honors the past by recognizing, celebrating and supporting the area's unique character, diverse communities and cultural business legacy.

The following high-level recommendations are intended to support **diverse cultural hubs** in the Southwest Area over the next 20 years.



COMMUNAL SPACES

In 2045, the Southwest Area will have a variety of safe, comfortable and authentic public spaces that encourage community gathering and enhance access to services, recreation, civic institutions and the arts.

The following high-level recommendations are intended to support **communal spaces** in the Southwest Area over the next 20 years.



INTEGRATED INDUSTRY

In 2045, the Southwest Area will continue to be a key industrial and manufacturing area within the City of Denver and will better connect with the surrounding communities.

The following high-level recommendations are intended to support **integrated industry** in the Southwest Area over the next 20 years.

- L1** Create **affordable and stable housing options** in every neighborhood.
- L6** **Support small and local businesses** that serve the community
- L10** Preserve the **unique historic and cultural character** of homes and buildings
- L11** Ensure **future buildings and public areas** reflect neighborhood character and are inviting for all
- L12** Create **vibrant commercial centers and corridors** that encourage new housing and job growth
- Q9** Create **vibrant programming and activities** that celebrate the area's diverse cultures

- L6** **Support small and local businesses** that serve the community
- L9** **Strengthen community-serving institutions** such as schools and non-profits
- L11** Ensure **future buildings and public areas** reflect neighborhood character and are inviting for all
- L12** Create **vibrant commercial centers and corridors** that encourage new housing and job growth
- M2** Ensure **major roads feel safe and comfortable** for all residents
- Q6** Increase resident **access to healthy and affordable food resources**
- Q7** Create **reliable and easy access to healthcare** and public health facilities.
- Q8** Ensure Southwest **neighborhoods feel safe and welcoming**
- Q9** Create **vibrant programming and activities** that celebrate the area's diverse cultures

- L7** **Support existing and attract new industrial businesses**
- L8** **Diversify the local economy** to increase job opportunities for residents
- L13** Make **industrial districts more walkable and comfortable**
- M3** Improve resident **access to public spaces and parks along the river**
- M9** **Reduce impacts of heavy truck traffic** on residential areas.
- Q5** Work with **industrial areas to support the community's environmental and public health priorities.**



HOUSING STABILITY AND OPTIONS

In 2045, the Southwest Area will continue to have housing options that are affordable and adequate for families from diverse backgrounds and will support additional housing that enhances community character and prevents displacement

The following high-level recommendations are intended to support **housing and stability options** in the Southwest Area over the next 20 years.

- L1** Create **affordable and stable housing options** in every neighborhood.
- L2** Ensure an **adequate supply of high-quality, well-maintained housing**
- L3** **Moderately increase housing density in residential areas**
- L4** Build **housing close to major transit corridors**
- L5** **Build affordable housing near commercial areas and corridors**
- L12** Create **vibrant commercial centers and corridors** that encourage new housing and job growth



IMPROVED INFRASTRUCTURE

In 2045, the Southwest Area will have infrastructure such as roads, trails, sidewalks and landscaping that promotes mobility choice, comfort, connectivity and safety.

The following high-level recommendations are intended to support **improved infrastructure** in the Southwest Area over the next 20 years.

- M1** **Build safe crossings** under or over major highways, rivers and railroads
- M2** Ensure **major roads feel safe and comfortable** for all residents
- M4** Build **new bikeway connections**
- M7** Enhance the **comfort and safety of bus service** along key routes
- M8** **Control high speeds** on streets parallel to Federal Blvd.
- M9** **Reduce impacts of heavy truck traffic** on residential areas.
- M11** Add **green infrastructure such as trees** near schools, parks and community centers.
- M12** Improve pedestrian crossings **to key community destinations**
- M13** Add **ADA-compliant and detached sidewalks** to local streets
- M14** **Improve busy intersections** where lots of people cross
- M16** Create **green streets** for biking and stormwater management



NATURAL RESOURCES

In 2045, the Southwest Area will honor its natural resources such as water and open spaces through adequate environmental protections and community access.

The following high-level recommendations are intended to support **natural resources** in the Southwest Area over the next 20 years.

- Q1** **Build green infrastructure** to minimize flooding, heat impacts, and pollution
- Q2** **Enhance parks and amenities** in area neighborhoods
- Q3** Enhance **recreational trail connections** and amenities
- Q4** Restore the **natural health and protection of the South Platte River**
- M3** Improve resident **access to public spaces and parks along the river**
- L7** **Support existing and attract new industrial businesses**

